

## Scandinavian Moods in Cinema – Spring 2017

EH 3 credit course – Monday & Thursday 11.40-13.00 in The DIS Movie Theatre



Valot\_26 Janne Hyytiäinen

*Light in the Dusk* (Aki Kaurismäki, Finland, 2006)

### **Instructor: Morten Egholm**

Ph. D., Film Studies, University of Copenhagen, 2009. Cand. mag., Scandinavian Studies, Film and Media Theory, University of Copenhagen, 1997. Associate professor in Danish Language, Literature and Culture, University of Groningen, The Netherlands, 2002-2006. Has written several articles in Danish, English and Dutch on film history, Danish literature, Danish theatre, and Danish and American TV series. Editor of the film journal *Kosmorama* 2010-2015. With DIS since 2008, since January 2012 as full time faculty.

Morten Egholm

Office hours: Thursdays, 1.15-3.00 pm in Room 10 B-15

### **DIS contact:**

Matt Kelley, Program Assistant, European Humanities Department

## Content

A study of contemporary films from the Nordic countries (Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Iceland). The focus will be on most important themes (and how these are reflected in modern Nordic societies), visual style, and narration strategies.

## Course objectives

Students taking this class will:

- Develop an appreciation and understanding of major themes, narration strategies and sense of visual style in older and contemporary films from the Nordic countries.
- Be able to relate the course material to social issues and political discussions in the modern Nordic societies
- Produce an academic research paper demonstrating the ability to interpret and discuss contemporary Nordic film



*Songs from The Second Floor (Roy Andersson, Sweden, 2000)*

## Course description

Considering the small amount of people living in the Nordic countries (approx. 25 mill.), it is quite impressive what an important role the countries have played in the international film history. Swedish director Ingmar Bergman has had an enormous influence on the works of Woody Allen, while Danish director Carl Th. Dreyer has inspired important names such as Sergio Leone, Martin Scorsese, and Paul Schrader. The aesthetic and visual style of Danish director Lars von Trier and the Dogma 95 Movement can be found in several modern film classics, e.g. the Award winning *Traffic* (2000) and *Saving Private Ryan* (1999). Directors such as the Finnish Aki Kaurismäki and the Icelandic Dagur Karí have been praised for their work at several important film festivals in Europe and the US.

In the course we will – through analysis – identify the Nordic way of telling a story in film. Further, we will focus on typical themes and the special mood and atmosphere that characterize these films. Finally, we will analyse how the films reflect everyday mentality and the most relevant and discussed social issues in the modern Nordic societies.

We will analyse and compare Nordic films by directors such as Carl Th. Dreyer, Lars von Trier, Ingmar Bergman, Roy Andersson, Thomas Vinterberg, Joachim Trier, Aki Kaurismäki, Dagur Kari, Ruben Östlund, Arne Skouen, Nicholas Winding Refn, and others.

The emphasis will be on films with a specific notion of style, alternative thematic and aesthetic approaches, and films with cult potential. Each of the five Nordic countries will get a section where we will look at the film historical development, the stylistic characteristics, the use of different film genres, the typical thematic elements, and the film's socio-cultural context. At the end of the course, the focus will be on Scandinavian directors making American films.



*Melancholia (Lars von Trier, Denmark, 2011)*

## Method

The course will include lectures, discussions of films, required readings, and film viewings. Each class will concentrate on one of the themes and will almost always include a related film viewing. The films are in the Nordic languages with English subtitles.

## Classroom Etiquette

The use of distracting devices (smartphones, iPads, laptops, etc.) is strictly prohibited during class. Failure to comply will adversely affect participation grades. Use of laptops for the purpose of note-



taking requires prior consultation with the professor. Students should refrain from all other computer activities, as they prove distracting to themselves and fellow students. Mobile phones and other electronic devices should of course be turned off and stored away.

### Attendance Policy

Attendance at all scheduled classes is required, and each student is responsible for all material covered or assigned in class. Included in the computation of the final grade in the course is participation. Participation extends to all class sessions, film viewings, as well as activity in class discussion and a general contribution to the progress of the class.

### Disability and Resource Statement

Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should immediately contact Office of Academic Support ([acadsupp@dis.dk](mailto:acadsupp@dis.dk)) to coordinate this. In order to receive accommodations, students should inform the instructor of approved DIS accommodations.

### Reading List

- Conolly, Jez & Caroline Whelan: *World Film Locations: Reykjavik*, Intellect: 2012  
 Cowie, Peter: *Finnish Cinema*, Tantivy Press: 1976  
 Cowie, Peter: *Scandinavian Cinema*, Tantivy Press: 1992  
 Egholm, Morten, Lars-Martin Sørensen & Lisbeth Richter Nielsen: *Kosmorama*, on line film journal with some articles in English, can be found on: <http://www.kosmorama.org/>  
**Egholm, Morten (ed.): *Scandinavian Moods in Cinema, Binder, DIS, Copenhagen: 2017***  
 Forsyth, Hardy: *Scandinavian Film*, Falcon Press, 1952  
 Hjort, Mette & Ib Bondebjerg: *Danish Directors*, Intellect: 2001  
 Hjort, Mette: *The Cinema of Small Nations*, Indiana University Press: 2007  
 Hjort, Mette: *Lone Scherfig's Italian For Beginners*, University of Washington Press: 2010  
 Hjort, Mette & Ib Bondebjerg: *Danish Directors 3*, Intellect: 2013  
 Hjort, Mette: *A Companion to Nordic Film*, Blackwell, 2016  
 Iversen, Gunnar, A. Söderbergh Widding & Tytti Soila: *Nordic National Cinemas*, Routledge: 1998  
 Jørholt, Eva, Mette Hjort & Eva Novrup Redvall: *The Danish Directors 2. Dialogues on the New Danish Fiction Cinema*: Intellect, Bristol/Chicago: 2011  
 Koskenen, Maaret: *Ingmar Bergman's The Silence*, University of Washington Press: 2010  
 Kääpä, Pietari: *Finland – directory in world Cinema*. Intellect: 2012  
 Kääpä, Pietari: *World Film Locations: Helsinki*, Intellect: 2013  
 Kääpä, Pietari: *From Nation-Building to Ecocosmopolitanism*, Bloomsbury, 2014  
 Larsson, Mariah & Anders Marklund: *Swedish Cinema – An Introduction and a Reader*: 2010  
 Lindqvist, Ursula: *Roy Andersson's Songs From The Second Floor*, University of Washington Press, 2016  
 Nestingen, Andrew (ed.): *In Search of Aki Kaurismäki. Aesthetics and Contexts*, Special Issue of The Journal of Finnish Studies, Volume 8, number 2, December 2004  
 Nestingen, Andrew & Trevor G. Elkington (red.): *Transnational Cinema in a Global North*, Wayne State University Press: 2005  
 Nordfjord, Björn: *Dagur Kari's Noi Albinoi*, University of Washington Press: 2010  
 Nørrested, Carl: *Greenland on Film. Amongst Eskimos, Adventurers, Colonisers, and Ethnographers*, North: 2011  
 Rombes, Nicholas: *New Punk Cinema*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2005  
 Shargel, Raphael: *Ingmar Bergman Interviews*, University Press of Mississippi: 2007  
 Shriverrice, Meryl: *Inclusion in New Danish Cinema: Sexuality and Transnational Belonging*, Intellect: 2015  
 Soila Tytti (ed.): *The Cinema of Scandinavia*, Wallflower: 2005  
 Sundholm, John, Isak Thorsen, Lars Gustaf Andersson and others: *Historical Dictionary of Scandinavian Cinema*, The Scarecrow Press: 2012  
 Thomphson, Clair C. (ed.): *Northern Contellations: New Readings in Nordic Cinema*, Intellect: 2006  
 Thomphson, Clair C.: *Thomas Vinterberg's The Celebration*, University of Washington Press: 2014

Tucker, John (ed.): *Scandinavian-Canadian Studies, Volume 19*, University of Victoria: 2010



*Journal of Scandinavian Cinema* (2010-). All issues can be found at the DIS Library

## Grades & Evaluation

The grades used by DIS instructors are as follows:

A = Excellent = 4

B = Well above average = 3

C = Average = 2

D = Below average but passing = 1

F = Failure or failure to complete = 0

Plus (+) and minus (-) grades are used for examinations and home assignments as well as for final grades. For purposes of calculating grade points and averages, the "+" is equal to .3 and the "-" is equal to minus .3.

## Evaluation

Midterm	25%
Research paper	25%
Final exam	25%
Class Participation (including Film Screening info tests)	25%

## Midterm & Final

The tests consist of questions of relatively simple facts (like: Who made this or that film?), questions of more complex character (like: mention the characteristics of this or that director), and questions to be answered with a short essay (like: Comment on the typical trends in modern Icelandic film). The answers will be weighted differently. **Midterm takes place in class on March the 16<sup>th</sup>**

## Film Screening info tests

It is very important that you view each required film before class (see p.7 in this syllabus). A very short, written test relating to the film's content will sometimes be given before the screening.

## Research Paper Synopsis or small presentation in class

The synopsis or short presentation in class should give the topic of your paper. Must be handed in/discussed on **November the 16<sup>th</sup>**.

## Research Paper

The topics for the research paper are decided by the student and the instructor together. Normally, it would be on (or relate to) subjects and films dealt with in the course. It is of course also possible to write about other topics/films by agreement with the instructor.

Suggested structure of your paper:

1. Table of contents.
2. Introduction: Presentation of the subject to be investigated.  
An overview of the contents.  
A comment on the methodology.
3. Analysis: Short description(s), comments, discussions, comparisons.
4. Summary and conclusion.
5. Notes & Bibliography.

The paper should be based on the required reading, the additional reading found in the DIS library and/or the Danish Film Museum Library, the films seen in class and/or films by your own choice.

In the Introduction, the factual material is presented. The main emphasis, though, should be on the analysis - that is: your personal discussion of the material. It is necessary to present the substance of the topic through paraphrasing and quotations (remember, always to footnote/endnote sources of direct quotations), but it is not sufficient only to paraphrase. The analysis of the material - your personal understanding and interpretation - is the important part of the paper. The paper should normally include a relatively detailed analysis of one of the films you have seen within the subject.

Length: Appr. 8-10 type written pages, or appr. 2800-3000 words.

The Research Paper is due **May the 4<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 pm (hand in at my office or e-mail it to me)**

## The Danish Film Institute Library

is located in the Film House, "Filmhuset", Gothersgade 55 (close to Nørreport Station). **The Library** has a large collection of books, periodicals, stills and other film-related material. The Film House also has a book store, a video library, a cafe, plus three cinemas that show films every day. The Library is open: Mon.: Closed, Tues: 12-7 p.m., Wed.: 12-4 p.m., Thur.: 12-7 p.m., Fri.: 12-4 p.m. Their web site is: [www.dfi.dk](http://www.dfi.dk) (also English version).

## Field studies

**February, 13<sup>th</sup>, 7-10.30 pm.:** Film night: Watching the Danish film **Melancholia** on the big screen in *Husets Biograf/The House's Movie Theatre* (snack and a beer/other drink included)

**February, 15<sup>th</sup>, 1-5 pm:** Visit from Danish director **Søren Balle** in class. Before the visit we will watch his debut feature *The Sunfish* (2014).

**April, 19<sup>th</sup>, 8.30-12.30:** Introduction to and discussion of research papers + relevant film viewing

## Film Viewings

Please note that it is mandatory to watch each film before the relevant class. Below you will find a schedule of film viewings that allows you the opportunity to view the films together as a class – on a (relatively) big screen. If, for some reason, you are unable to attend a viewing or would like to see a particular film again, it will be available on reserve in a specific semester shelf at the Library (ask one of the librarians). **Keep in mind** that these films act as the texts of this course and it is therefore just as necessary to watch each film attentively (i.e. take notes) before the class sessions in which it will be discussed.

**Each film will be screened once, at 6:10 pm on the given date in The DIS Movie Theatre next to the library, in Vestergade 23, Ground Floor:**

### Viewing Dates:

### Film:

Monday, January, 23	<b>DENMARK</b>
Thursday, January, 26	<i>The Word</i>
Monday, January, 30	<i>The Celebration</i>
FIELD STUDY: Mon., Feb., 13, 7-10.30 pm	<i>Adam's Apples</i>
FIELD STUDY: Wednesday, February, 15	<i>Melancholia</i>
	<i>The Sunfish</i>
	<b>FINLAND</b>
Thursday, February, 16	<i>Skin, Skin</i>
Monday, February, 20	<i>Shadows in Paradise</i>
Thursday, February, 23	<i>Concrete Night</i>
	<b>SWEDEN</b>
Monday, March, 6	<i>The Seventh Seal</i>
Thursday, March, 9	<i>Songs From the Second Floor</i>
Thursday, March, 16	<i>Let the Right One In</i>
Monday, March, 27	<i>The Reunion</i>
Thursday, March, 30	<i>Force Majeure</i>
	<b>NORWAY</b>
Monday, April, 3	<i>The Bothered Man</i>
Thursday, April, 7	<i>Reprise</i>
FIELD STUDY: Wednesday April, 19	<i>I Belong</i>
	<b>ICELAND</b>
Thursday, April, 20	<i>Virgin Mountain</i>
	<b>SCANDINAVIAN AUTEURS GO AMERICA</b>
Monday, April, 24	<i>The Good Heart</i> (Iceland/USA)
Thursday, April, 27	<i>Drive</i> (Denmark/USA)

## Course schedule:

All the readings can be found in the binder except those marked with (*on Canvas*) – they have been uploaded on Canvas under *files*.

- 1) January the 19<sup>th</sup>:  
**Introduction: Similarities and differences between the Nordic countries, and their film culture**

## Denmark

- 2) January the 23<sup>th</sup>:  
**Typical elements in Scandinavian cinema  
Danish film history**

**Readings:**

John Sundholm: *Chronology*

Casper Tybjerg: *Denmark, Danish Cinema 1930-2000*

**Before January the 26<sup>th</sup>: Viewing of *The Word* (121 minutes)**

- 3) January the 26<sup>th</sup>:  
**The first big Scandinavian auteur: Carl Th. Dreyer (1889-1968)  
Film: *The Word* (1955, Denmark)**

**Reading:** Drum & Drum: Chapter 12: Ordet

**Before January the 30<sup>th</sup>: Viewing of *The Celebration* (102 minutes)**

- 4) January the 30<sup>th</sup>:  
**The Danish Dogma 95 project  
Film: *The Celebration* (Thomas Vinterberg, 1998, Denmark)**

**Readings:**

Peter Schepelern: *Film according to Dogma: Ground Rules, Obstacles, and Liberations*

Peter Schepelern: *After The Celebration: Looking back on Dogme*, (on Canvas, can also be found here: <http://www.kosmorama.org/Artikler/After-The-Celebration.aspx>)

**Before February the 2<sup>nd</sup>: Viewing of *Adam's Apples* (90 minutes)**



5) February the 2<sup>nd</sup>:

**Film: *Adam's Apples* (Anders Thomas Jensen, 2005, Denmark)**

**Readings:**

Johannes H. Christensen: *Apple Pie From the Tree of Knowledge* (on Canvas)

Amy Strada: *All Danish Films aren't the same – just most of them* (on Canvas)

**February, 6-11: Core Course Week**

6) February the 13<sup>th</sup>:

**Lars von Trier – The big Scandinavian name in the 90's, 00's and 10's**

**Readings:**

Mette Hjort: *Lars von Trier*

Peter Schepelern: *The Element of Crime and Punishment* (on Canvas)

Simon Galagher: *La Rejetee Couvrir Cannes 2011*

**February, 13<sup>th</sup>: 7-10.30 pm, Huset Biograf:**

**FILM EVENING: WATCHING *MELANCHOLIA* (Lars von Trier, 2011, 135 minutes)**

**Free drink, snack, and film discussion included!**

**February, 15, 1-5 pm:**

**FIELD STUDY: Watching *The Sunfish* (Denmark, 2014), and visit from the film's director Søren Balle**

## **Finland:**

7) February the 16<sup>th</sup>:

**Discussion of *Melancholia* and Nordic Film History: Finland**

**Readings:**

Tytti Soila: *Finland*

Pietari Kääpä: *Introduction to Directory of World Cinema: Finland*

**Before February, the 20<sup>th</sup>: Viewing of *Skin, Skin* (86 minutes)**

- 8) February the 20<sup>th</sup>:  
**Finnish New Wave**  
**Film: *Skin, Skin* (Mikko Niskanen, 1966, Finland)**

**Readings:**

Pietari Kääpä: *Skin, Skin*

**Before February, the 23<sup>rd</sup>: Viewing of *Shadows in Paradise* (74 minutes)**

- 9) February the 23<sup>rd</sup>:  
**Aki Kaurismäki – the big Finnish auteur name in contemporary art house cinema**  
**Film: *Shadows in Paradise* (Aki Kaurismäki, 1986, Finland)**

**Readings:**

Tytti Soila: *The Face of a Sad Rat. The Cinematic Universe of the Kaurismäki Brothers*

Anu Koivunen: *Do You Remember Monrepos? Melancholia, Modernity and Working-Class Masculinity in "The Man without a Past"*

John Sundholm: *Juha*

**Long tour/Break, February, 25 – March, 5**

**Before March the 6<sup>th</sup>: Viewing of *Concrete Night* (95 minutes)**

- 10) March the 6<sup>th</sup>:  
**Film: *Concrete Night* (Pirjo Honkasalo, 2013, Finland)**

## **Sweden:**

**Before March the 9<sup>th</sup>: Viewing of *The Seventh Seal* (95 minutes)**

- 11) March the 9<sup>th</sup>:  
**Introduction to Swedish film history – from The Golden Age 1917-24 to Bergman**  
**The most famous director in Scandinavian film history: Ingmar Bergman**  
**Film: *The Seventh Seal* (Ingmar Bergman, 1957, Sweden)**

**Before March the 13<sup>th</sup>: Viewing of *Songs From the Second Floor* (95 minutes)**

- 12) March the 13<sup>th</sup>:  
**Swedish film history after Bergman**  
**The big Swedish outsider name: Roy Andersson**  
**Film: *Songs From the Second Floor* (Roy Andersson, 2000, Sweden)**

**Readings:**

Maaret Koskenen: *Swedish Films in the 80's and the 90's*

Mariah Larsson: *A Renewal of Swedish Film?*

Roy Andersson: *The Complex Image*

Jonathan Romney: *Funny Peculiar* – Roy Andersson

13) March the 16<sup>th</sup>:

**Midterm in class, 80 minutes**

**Long Tour/Break, March, 18-26**

**Before March the 27<sup>th</sup>: Viewing of *Let The Right One In* (110 minutes)**

14) March the 27<sup>th</sup>:

**Film: *Let the Right One In* (Thomas Alfredsson, 2008, Sweden)**

**Readings:**

Rochelle Wright: *Vampire in the Stockholm suburbs: "Let the Right One In" and genre hybridity*

Anders Marklund: *Old fangs into new viewers: The American poster to Let the Right One In (on Canvas)*

**Before March the 30<sup>th</sup>: Viewing of *The Reunion* (86 minutes)**

15) March the 30<sup>th</sup>:

**Film: *The Reunion* (Anna Odell, 2013, Sweden)**

**Before April the 3<sup>rd</sup>: Viewing of *Force Majeure* (120 minutes)**

16) April the 3<sup>rd</sup>:

**Film: *Force Majeure* (Ruben Östlund, 2014, Sweden)**

**Readings:**

Maximilien van Aertryck: *Ruben Östlund: Director of Play*

## **Norway:**

**Before April the 6<sup>th</sup>: Viewing of *The Bothersome Man* (90 minutes)**

17) April the 6<sup>th</sup>:

**Norwegian film history**

**Film: *The Bothered Man* (Jens Lien, 2006, Norway)**

**Readings:**

Gunnar Iversen: *Norway*

Ellen Rees: *Norway: Norwegian Cinema 1997-2006*

**Before April the 10<sup>th</sup>: Viewing of *Reprise* (103 minutes)**

18) April the 10<sup>th</sup>:

**Film: *Reprise* (Joachim Trier, 2006, Norway)**

**Readings:**

James Ricci: "Reprise" by film director Joachim Trier (on Canvas)

**Field Study, April, 19<sup>th</sup>, 8.30-12.30:** Introduction to and discussion of research papers + viewing of *I Belong* (Norway, 119 minutes)

**NB!!! HAND IN SYNOPSIS (½-1 page, double space) OR MAKE A VERY BRIEF PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH PAPER IDEA IN CLASS**

**April, 12-17: TRAVEL BREAK/OPTIONAL TOUR**

19) April the 20<sup>th</sup>:

**Film: *I Belong* (Dag Johan Haugerud, 2012, Norway)**

## **Iceland:**

**Before April the 24<sup>th</sup>: Viewing of *Virgin Mountain* (96 minutes)**

20) April the 24<sup>th</sup>:

**Film: *Virgin Mountain* (Dagur Kári, 2015, Iceland)**

**Readings:**

Björn Norðfjörð: *Noi Albinoi*

## Scandinavian auteurs go America:

Before April the 27<sup>th</sup>: Viewing of *The Good Heart* (95 minutes)

- 21) April the 27<sup>th</sup>:  
Film: *The Good Heart* (Dagur Kári, 2009, Iceland)  
Perhaps visit from Dagur Kári in class!

Before May the 1<sup>st</sup>: Viewing of *Drive* (95 minutes)

- 22) May the 1<sup>st</sup>:  
Film: *Drive* (Nicholas Winding Refn, 2011, Denmark/USA)

**Readings:**

Justin Vicari: Drive

- 23) May the 4<sup>th</sup>:  
Conclusion/info about exam + Scandinavian Hygge-mood!

Final Proctored Exam: TBA

Final paper due May, 4, 11:59 pm



